

# **TOWN OF TRURO MASSACHUSETTS**



## **BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND COMMISSIONS HANDBOOK**

**Truro Select Board • Town Administrative Office  
24 Town Hall Road • P.O. Box 2030  
Truro, MA 02666  
(508) 349-7004**

**Effective March 23, 2021**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE TRURO BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND COMMISSIONS HANDBOOK



**Please sign and return this page to the  
Town of Truro Administrative Office.**

**As a member of the Truro Select Board or any Truro Town Board, Committee,  
Commission, Council or Working Group, I hereby acknowledge that I have  
reviewed Truro Boards, Committees, Commissions and Handbook, and agree to  
uphold and abide by the provision of the handbook and conduct myself in  
accordance.**

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Signature

---

E-mail Address

---

Name of Board/Committee/Commission

---

Position

---

Date

# FOREWARD

The Truro Select Board has prepared this handbook as a general informational aid for all Town committees, boards, and commissions. You join the many residents who have contributed their time and energy to serving the Town in its 312-year history. We are grateful for this service and want it to be a rewarding and informative experience.

While the handbook has been published for use by committees, boards, and commissions appointed by the Select Board, we hope it will be useful to other elected officers and the citizens at large. It provides general descriptions and links to the important state and local laws and policies that govern the conduct of municipal officials.

We all possess valuable skills, experiences, and insights gained from our education, occupations, or volunteer service with community groups or nonprofit organizations. The wide variety of skills that volunteers offer to Truro is an asset, but municipal service also requires an understanding of additional responsibilities or limits, often defined by law.

In its appointments to committees, the Truro Select Board strives to find people who will listen, learn and work collaboratively -- even when opinions differ. The goal is to make decisions and policies that are prudent for the entire Town and its taxpayers. The Select Board liaisons to each committee are available to offer committee members guidance and report on their work.

The Select Board thanks you for volunteering your time and effort to serve our community.

Bob Weinstein, Chair  
Kristen Reed, Vice Chair  
Sue Areson, Clerk  
Jan Worthington, Member  
Stephanie Rein, Member

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# Part 1

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been developed to assist members of the various boards, committees and commissions in carrying out their duties. The information is meant to serve as a guideline. The specific duties and laws related to a particular board, committee or commission may be found in the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) or, in some cases, in Truro's bylaws.

The most essential skills that board members can bring to service are the ability to listen, learn and work collaboratively and respectfully with colleagues -- even when opinions differ. While expertise in the topics that a board covers is beneficial, it is not essential to a member's ability to contribute and be productive.

## MEMBERSHIP

Members of local boards (refers to boards, committees and commissions) are either elected or are appointed, mostly by the Select Board. The Town Moderator appoints members of the Finance Committee and the Cape Cod Regional Technical High School committee. (See Attachment 3 for the full list of boards, committees and commissions.)

The appointing authority has sole discretion to make appointments as it considers to be in the best interests of the town.

Only full-time Truro residents/voters may be considered for appointment to regulatory boards. The Select Board may consider non-resident taxpayers for appointments to non-regulatory boards.

The Truro town charter specifies the powers and procedures for elected and appointed boards in Chapter 6.

[https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/zz\\_trurocharter\\_may\\_2018\\_2\\_update.pdf](https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/zz_trurocharter_may_2018_2_update.pdf)

## Oath of Office

Written notification of appointment is issued to newly appointed board members, who must report to the Town Clerk's office to be sworn in. Elected and appointed officials must sign an acknowledgement of receipt of information on the state's Open Meeting Law -- <http://www.mass.gov/ago/government-resources/open-meeting-law/> They also must complete state-mandated online ethics/conflict-of-interest training, required every two years.

## Term of Office

The full term of office for most positions on standing boards is three years, ending on June 30 of the third year for appointed Boards. Elected board members' term ends the day after the election for their seat. Terms are staggered to assure continuity as new members are elected or appointed.

## Reappointments

Appointed board members whose terms are due to expire must inform the appointing authority whether they choose to be reappointed and must reapply to continue serving. The Select Board must vote on all reappointments.

## Vacancies / Resignations / Lack Of Attendance

If a board member can no longer fulfill the duties of his/her term of office, s/he must submit a written resignation stating the effective date to the appointing authority, with a copy to the board chairperson and the Town Clerk.

If a member or alternate member of an appointed board is absent for four consecutive meetings without approval by the rest of the board, the chair will alert the appointing authority and that member will be replaced.

The Select Board encourages board members who resign to specify their reasons, if other than personal. This may be done through an exit interview with the board chair or the Select Board liaison. An exit interview questionnaire is available ***LINK HERE*** as a guideline for information requested.

## Recall / Removal

The town charter provides a mechanism to remove elected officials through a citizen petition and subsequent recall election.

Members of appointed boards may be removed by the appointing authority if they are found to violate professional codes of conduct, detailed in Part 2. Specifically, the charter provides that any appointed official or board member may be suspended or removed from office by the appointing authority for good cause. These include: Incapacity other than temporary illness; inefficiency and/or inability to perform assigned tasks; insubordination and/or refusal to carry out lawful instructions; or conduct unbecoming to the office and/or which reflects adversely upon the town.

# OFFICERS / DUTIES

## Election of Officers

Every town board shall elect a chair, vice-chair and clerk annually. For elected boards, the election of officers occurs in May. The new chairman shall notify the appointing authority and the Town Clerk of the names of officers.

There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms a member may be elected to serve as an officer.

## Duties of Officers

There are limitations on officers, absent direction from a majority of the board. No board member, including its officers, may make comments at a meeting or to the media as if they were representing the entire board unless they were authorized to do so by a majority of the members..

The Charter specifies that no member of a board has any individual authority. The chairperson of a board may, with the consent of a majority of its members, represent the entire board when requested to do so at public meetings.

The following are basic duties of officers. Boards may modify these duties to suit their particular needs.

## Chairperson

- Presides at all meetings, decides questions of order;
- Working with the rest of the board, sets agenda and dates for meetings;
- Ensures that meetings and agendas are properly posted in accordance with the Open Meeting Law;
- Exercises control over public meetings and hearings, ensures that the proper decorum is maintained and that business is conducted in an orderly and appropriate manner;
- Represents the board before the Select Board, other town bodies, the public and the media, as required -- and with the consent of a majority of the board;
- Ensures that a summary of the board's actions of the previous year are submitted to the Select Board for inclusion in the Annual Town Report.

## Vice Chairperson

- The Vice Chair assumes all responsibilities of the Chair whenever the latter is absent from meetings, and performs other duties as necessary.

## **Clerk/Secretary**

- Ensures that minutes of every meeting are taken, approved and filed with the Town Clerk in a timely manner;
- Ensures that copies of documents and other exhibits used during meetings are provided and referenced in a list as addenda to the approved meeting minutes;
- In the absence of paid staff, performs any other clerical or administrative duties, as required.

## **MEETINGS**

Most boards rely on Robert's Rules of Order in running meetings.

<https://robertsrules.com/>

Or the "in brief" version:

<https://robertsrules.com/books/newly-revised-3rd-in-brief-edition/>

## **Open Meeting Law**

All board members must familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law -- MGL Chapter 30A, Sections 18-25 -- and its accompanying regulations -- 940 CMR 29.00. The law sets forth specific requirements for posting, scheduling, conducting and recording meetings. Its purpose is to assure that deliberations and decisions made by public officials are conducted openly, and not hidden from the public.

Failure to follow the Open Meeting Law may result in the invalidation of actions taken at a meeting and could result in a penalty of not more than \$1,000 for each intentional violation.

## **Massachusetts Open Meeting Law**

<http://www.mass.gov/ago/government-resources/open-meeting-law/>

## **Massachusetts Regulations**

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/09/25/New%20OML%20Regulations%20%28Clean%20version%29.pdf>

## **Definition of Meeting**

The Open Meeting Law defines a meeting as "a deliberation by a public body with respect to any matter within the body's jurisdiction." Meeting does not include:

- An on-site inspection of a project or program, so long as the members do not deliberate;
- Attendance by a quorum of a public body at a public or private gathering, including a conference or training program or a media, social or other event, so long as the members do not deliberate;
- Attendance by a quorum of a public body at a meeting of another public body that has complied with the notice requirements of the Open Meeting Law, so long as the visiting members communicate only by open participation in the meeting on those matters under discussion by the host body and do not deliberate;
- A meeting of a quasi-judicial board or commission held for the sole purpose of making a decision required in an adjudicatory proceeding brought before it; or
- A Town Meeting which includes the attendance by a quorum of a public body.

Deliberation is defined as “an oral or written communication through any medium, including electronic mail, between or among a quorum of a public body on any public business within its jurisdiction.” Board members may distribute meeting agendas, scheduling information or other reports or documents that may be discussed at a meeting, provided that no opinion of a member is expressed.

It is a violation of the Open Meeting Law to discuss board business outside of a properly posted meeting. This includes individual conversations that occur in serial fashion in which a quorum of members participate and discuss or deliberate. An example is if Member A emails or calls Member B about a topic that is before the board and that email (or phone conversation) is shared with Members C & D, along with opinions on the topic.

These actions deprive the public of the opportunity to attend and monitor the decision-making process.

## **Posting / Agendas**

The Open Meeting Law requires meetings of all public bodies to be posted at least 48 hours in advance of the public meeting, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays. The date and time that the notice is posted must be conspicuously recorded.

Notices must include the name of the board, and the date, time and location of the meeting. Notices must also include a sufficiently specific listing of the topics that the chair anticipates will be discussed.

Chairpersons are expected to exercise good judgment when hearing/discussing issues not on the agenda. Routine issues may be aired, while new and/or potentially contentious issues should not be discussed at that meeting to allow for proper posting and public discussion.

## **Location / Times**

Meetings must be held in a handicap-accessible, public location. The majority of public meetings are at Town Hall, 24 Town Hall Road.

The Select Board recommends scheduling meetings no earlier than 8 a.m. and ending no later than 9 p.m. to allow for maximum public attendance.

When posting meetings at Town Hall, it is also necessary to request a meeting room for the meeting. This is strongly recommended to ensure a room is available prior to posting a meeting.

## **Quorum**

A quorum must be present for a board to convene a meeting. Unless otherwise defined by law, a quorum is a simple majority of the total number of members of a board, including vacancies. For example, a five-member board requires three members to conduct business; if there are two vacant positions, the board still requires three members to constitute a quorum.

Absent a quorum, whether due to absences or lack of full membership, the board cannot conduct business.

## **Executive Session**

The Open Meeting Law requires that all meetings of a governmental body be open to the public, with limited exceptions for which a board may enter into executive session. All appointed boards are urged to consult with counsel (with prior authorization from the Town Manager) if they have any questions about the process and/or permissibility of having an executive session.

An executive session is closed to the public, but the board must first convene in a duly posted open session. A majority of the members must vote by roll-call to enter into the executive session. The motion must state the reason for the executive session and whether the board will return to open session. All votes taken in the executive session must be recorded roll-call votes.

Executive session may be held only for specific reasons, the most common are:

- To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.

- To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.
- To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body.
- To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

**A quick guide to executive session:**

<https://www.masc.org/member-resources/resource-publications/executive-session/file>

**[See Part 2 for more detail on allowable topics for an executive session.](#)**

## **Public Hearings**

The Select Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission and Board of Health are sometimes required by state law or local regulation to hold public hearings. Such hearings are to gather information from which the board can reach a determination, usually regarding the issuance of a license or permit.

Such hearings will typically have requirements and time frames for advertising and posting public notice of the hearing, notifying abutters, and rendering and filing a decision. These requirements vary depending on the type of hearing. It is the responsibility of the chairperson to assure that the requirements of the public hearing process are properly followed.

**[See Part 2 for detail on the procedures for public hearings.](#)**

## **Minutes**

The Open Meeting Law requires every governmental body to create and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings, including executive sessions. Meetings may not proceed without a designated person responsible for providing a written record.

Minutes specify the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present or absent. They include a summary of the discussions on each subject, actions taken and a record of all votes. A list of documents and other exhibits used at the meeting are part of the minutes.

Minutes need not be verbatim transcripts of a meeting. Audio or video recordings may not be used as permanent records of a meeting.

## Availability / Filing of Minutes

The Open Meeting Law requires public bodies to create and approve minutes in a timely manner. The approval of minutes should always appear as an agenda item to encourage timely completion and filing. A “timely manner” is considered to be within the next three public body meetings or 30 days from the date of the meeting, whichever is later, unless the public body can show good cause for further delay. The Attorney General encourages minutes to be approved at a public body’s next meeting whenever possible.

Minutes of an open meeting, in whatever form -- notes, draft, tape recording -- are considered public records and must be made available to the public within 10 days upon request. Materials or other exhibits used in an open meeting are also to be made available to the public within 10 days upon request.

Original copies of minutes of all posted and emergency meetings must be filed with the Town Clerk’s Office within two weeks of approval. The Town Clerk notes the date and time when minutes are received and makes them available to the public.

Copies of agendas and minutes are also posted on the town website.

<https://www.truro-ma.gov/minutes-and-agendas>

## CONDUCT OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

### Conflict of Interest

Members of a board, commission or committee are considered municipal employees, regardless of lack of compensation, and are subject to the Conflict of Interest Law -- [www.state.ma.us/ethics](http://www.state.ma.us/ethics). Its purpose is to assure that the private financial interests and personal relationships of public employees do not conflict with their public obligations. The law also regulates the activities of public officials after their term of service is over.

The State Ethics Commission’s “Introduction to the Conflict of Interest Law for the Public Sector” specifies:

- You may not ask for or accept anything, regardless of its value, if it is offered in exchange for agreeing to perform or not perform an official act.
- You may not ask for or accept anything worth \$50 or more from anyone with whom you have official dealings. Examples of regulated gifts include: sports tickets, drinks and meals, travel expenses, conference fees, gifts of appreciation, entertainment expenses, free use of vacation homes and complimentary tickets to charitable events. If a prohibited gift is offered, you may refuse or return it; you may donate it to a nonprofit organization, provided you do not take the tax write-off; you may pay the giver the full value of the gift; or, with certain types of

gifts, it may be considered “a gift to your public employer,” provided it remains in the office and does not ever go home with you.

- You may not accept honoraria for a speech that is in any way related to your official duties, unless you are a state legislator.
- You may not hire, promote, supervise or otherwise participate in the employment of your immediate family or your spouse’s immediate family.
- You may not take any type of official action which will affect the financial interests of your immediate family or your spouse’s immediate family. For instance, you may not participate in licensing or inspection processes involving a family member’s business.
- You may not take any official action affecting your own financial interest, or the financial interest of a business partner, private employer, or any organization for which you serve as an officer, director or trustee. You may not take any official action regarding an after-hours employer, or its geographic competitors; you may not participate in licensing, inspection, zoning or other issues that affect a company you own, or its competitors; if you serve on the board of a nonprofit organization (that is substantially engaged in business activities), you may not take any official action which would impact that organization, or its competitors.
- Unless you qualify for an exemption, you may not have more than one job with the same municipality or county, or more than one job with the state.
- Except under special circumstances, you may not have a financial interest in a contract with your public employer. For example, if you are a full-time town employee, a company you own may not be a vendor to that town unless you meet specific criteria, the contract is awarded by a bid process, and you publicly disclose your financial interest.
- You may not represent anyone but your public employer in any matter in which your public employer has an interest. For instance, you may not contact other government agencies on behalf of a company, an association, a friend, or even a charitable organization.
- You may not ever disclose confidential information, data or material which you gained or learned as a public employee.
- Unless you make a proper, public disclosure in writing -- including all the relevant facts -- you may not take any action that could create an appearance of impropriety, or could cause an impartial observer to believe your official actions are tainted with bias or favoritism.
- You may not use your official position to obtain unwarranted privileges, or any type of special treatment, for yourself or anyone else. For instance: you may not approach your subordinates, vendors whose contracts you oversee, or people who are subject to your official authority to propose private business dealings.
- You may not use public resources for political or private purposes. Examples of "public resources" include: office computers, phones, fax machines, postage machines, copiers, official cars, staff time, sick time, uniforms, and official seals.

- You may not, after leaving public service, take a job involving public contracts or any other particular matter in which you participated as a public employee.

If a board member has a conflict of interest, or an appearance of a conflict, in any matter before the board, that member should not be counted in the quorum, or participate in or be present for discussion or votes on that matter.

- For in person meetings the member should leave the room,
- For remote meetings the person should turn off their camera and microphone

A person may submit a request for determination of conflict of interest to either the appointing authority or State Ethics Commission. If board members have any questions about their activities, they should file a written request for a determination with Town Counsel, through the Town Manager. The answer will be in writing and will become a matter of public record. A board member may also request a confidential opinion directly from the State Ethics Commission.

## **Standards of Conduct**

To ensure public confidence in government, members of all town boards, elected or appointed, are expected to maintain standards of professionalism in public interactions and private communications. They are expected to act with integrity and to treat town staff, other board members and the public with civility and respect, even when differences occur.

Board chairs and members are encouraged to assess from time to time how the group is functioning as a team. Any member who has concerns about the board's effectiveness is encouraged to speak to the chair or the Select Board liaison so that issues can be resolved quickly.

It is important during meetings to stick to posted agendas and to keep discussions respectful. While it is up to the chair to maintain order, individual members must hold themselves to professional standards.

### **Some guidelines:**

- Be well-informed concerning the duties of the board on which you serve.
- Keep in mind that you represent the Town of Truro.
- Accept your role as one of public service, not a means to benefit personally, professionally or financially.
- Treat all staff as professionals, respecting the abilities, experience and dignity of each individual.
- Share information obtained on pending issues with other board members.
- In conducting official business, give the clear impression that you cannot be improperly influenced in performing your duties.

- Abide by state ethics rules, making every effort to avoid any appearance of conflict, and properly disclosing any potential conflict.
- Conduct public business in a manner that promotes open and transparent government.
- You may never disclose confidential matters not legally subject to disclosure that come before the board in executive session.

Anyone who feels that a board member is acting inconsistently with these standards may take any of the following actions:

- Speak privately with the board member about his/her behavior.
- Speak to the Select Board liaison to the board in question.
- Ask the chairperson of the board to speak with the individual.
- Bring the matter to the attention of the appointing authority.
- File a formal complaint in writing to the Town Manager.
- File a formal complaint with the Select Board.

[See Part 2 for details on Truro's policies governing professional conduct.](#)

## ADMINISTRATION

### Public Records

With few exceptions, the Massachusetts Public Records Law considers every document and record, hard copy or electronic, made or received by a board to be a public record. These include emails.

The public has a right of access to these records. Town boards and departments are obligated to properly secure and maintain public records. The records are to be stored in a public building, not in private residences.

The town's records custodian, often the Town Clerk, is responsible for providing access to the board's records upon request. A reasonable fee may be charged for copies and for research involved in processing requests for records.

#### **A Guide to the Massachusetts Public Records Law:**

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/prepdf/guide.pdf>

#### **The Public Records Law defines how long records must be preserved:**

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcmu/rmuidx.html>

## Use of Town Counsel

Requests for opinions or assistance from Town Counsel must be directed through the office of the Town Manager. Some boards require that requests be made through the chair.

[https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy\\_10\\_-\\_access\\_to\\_town\\_counsel\\_revised\\_dec\\_1.\\_2015\\_signed.pdf](https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy_10_-_access_to_town_counsel_revised_dec_1._2015_signed.pdf)

## Town Charter

Members of all boards should familiarize themselves with Truro's charter:

[https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/zz\\_trurocharter\\_may\\_2018\\_2\\_update.pdf](https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/zz_trurocharter_may_2018_2_update.pdf)

## PART 2

This section of the handbook is to provide more specifics on some of the topics above. It also includes information on reserving meeting rooms, sample formatting for agendas and a staff directory.

## ELECTIONS

The Truro Town Charter sets the annual election date as the second Tuesday in May. Only full-time, registered voters are eligible to run for town boards.

Prospective candidates for elected boards must take out nomination papers from the Town Clerk to run for office. Once nomination papers are available, typically in January, they must be returned no later than 35 days before Town Meeting. Nomination papers must be signed by 20 registered Truro voters. The Town Clerk must certify the signatures on the nomination papers and the candidate must accept the nomination to be listed on the ballot. (Candidates have 48 hours after filing to withdraw their nomination.)

## Vacancies

- Any elected or appointed board member who chooses to resign must submit a signed resignation letter to the Town Clerk.
- If a vacancy occurs on an appointed board, the chairperson must notify the appointing authority, which shall appoint a new member to serve for the balance of the unexpired term. If a new member is not appointed within 45 days of the

notification of the vacancy, a replacement may be named by the remaining members of the board.

- A special election is held to fill a vacancy on the Select Board.
- If a vacancy occurs on the Planning Board, the unexpired term shall be filled by joint appointment of the Select Board and the remainder of the Planning Board until the next General election, at which time, the office shall be filled, by election, for the remainder of the unexpired term.
- If a vacancy occurs on the Board of Library Trustees, the School Committee, Housing Authority or Cemetery Commission -- all elected -- the remaining members must notify the Select Board. After a weeks' notice, the Select Board and remaining board members shall appoint a new member to serve until the next general election.

Vacancies on boards are posted on the Town of Truro website -- <https://www.truro-ma.gov> -- the Town Hall bulletin board and distributed to local media outlets for publication or broadcast.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Some procedures are common to all hearings. The chairperson should run the hearing and state the guidelines. All questions should be directed to the chair. Some guidelines:

- Chair opens hearing and states ground rules;
- Petitioner/applicant makes presentation;
- Information is received from town boards and officials;
- Board members question petitioner;
- Public asks questions, offers comments through the chair;
- Board receives any written documents;
- Chair closes public portion of hearing (may continue to another date, if necessary, before closing hearing);
- Board begins deliberations, seeking answers to questions, if necessary;
- During deliberations, findings of fact are noted;
- Board votes on decision;
- Decision is written using notes from discussion, facts and findings;
- Chair closes hearing;
- Decisions are filed with appropriate parties.

Decisions must be based on the testimony and evidence submitted, written or spoken. The rules of evidence that apply in court do not apply in public hearings of local boards. As such, hearsay and other evidence that would not be permitted in a court may be heard by a board and given such weight as each member deems appropriate. Irrelevant, immaterial and information based on emotions are not appropriate evidence upon which to base a decision.

# EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Open Meeting Law allows the following exceptions for closing a public meeting:

- To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.
- To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.
- To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body.
- To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.
- To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto.
- To investigate charges of criminal misconduct or to consider the filing of criminal complaints.
- To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.
- To consider or interview applicants for employment or appointment by a preliminary screening committee if an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants. This clause shall not apply to any meeting, including meetings of a preliminary screening committee, to consider and interview applicants who have passed a prior preliminary screening.
- To meet or confer with a mediator with respect to any litigation or decision on any public business within its jurisdiction involving another party, group or entity.
- To discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively sensitive or other proprietary information provided in the course of activities by a governmental body as: an energy supplier under a license granted by the department of public utilities; in the course of activities conducted as a municipal aggregator; or in the course of activities conducted by a cooperative consisting of governmental entities when such governmental body, municipal aggregator or cooperative determines that such disclosure will adversely affect its ability to conduct business in relation to other entities making, selling or distributing electric power and energy.

<https://www.masc.org/member-resources/resource-publications/executive-session/file>

# MEETING ROOMS

All town departments and boards must reserve meeting space in advance. Reserving a meeting room does not constitute a meeting posting.

Town Hall meeting rooms are scheduled through the town manager's office, on a first-come, first-served basis. Room assignments may be changed at the discretion of the administration.

Reservations should be made at least 72 hours in advance of a meeting. They may be requested verbally or in writing, but shall not be considered final until confirmed by the administrative office.

Verbal or written cancellation of a meeting room reservation is required as soon in advance as possible.

## Town Hall

There are three meeting rooms in Town Hall. The rooms are primarily for public meetings of town boards and committees; such uses shall receive priority. Rooms may be used for other private, nonprofit purposes on an intermittent basis, if available, with the approval of the Town Manager. Private parties are not permitted.

Room Name	Approx. Seating Capacity
Historic meeting room	6
Lower level conference room	6-8
Select Board's Chambers	100

## Hours

Meeting rooms are available during regular Town Hall hours and during the evening on Monday through Thursday. Town Hall offices are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Requests for use of the meeting rooms on other days must be made through the Town Manager's office.

## General Rules

- All meetings must remain open to the public, with the exception of executive sessions.
- The chairperson is responsible for assuring that his/her board/committee is able to gain access to the building.

- The chair of the board holding the meeting, or a town employee serving as staff support, is responsible for assuring that the meeting room is left in an orderly fashion.
- Food and beverages: Light refreshments are allowed in meeting rooms. All trash must be removed and any spills or other messes are promptly and properly attended to.
- No smoking or alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises.
- Exceptions to these rules may be made at the discretion of the Select Board.
- Repeated violations of these rules may result in restrictions on future scheduling and use of the meeting rooms.

## Community Center

Community center rooms must be reserved by filling out a form by emailing [coadirector@truro-ma.gov](mailto:coadirector@truro-ma.gov)

The form must be received at least two weeks in advance of the meeting / event.

Room	Approx. Seating Capacity
Multipurpose room	400 people, chairs only 190 people, chairs and tables
Pamet Room (portion of Multipurpose)	125, chairs only 65, chairs and tables
Truro Room (portion of Multipurpose)	250 people, chairs only 131 people, chairs and tables

## Public Safety Facility

The dispatch center maintains a reservation calendar for the public meeting room at the Safety Facility. The room holds 45 people at tables. Requests may be made by email or phone. Call: 508-487-8730. Email Martha Wheeler: [wheeler@truropolice.org](mailto:wheeler@truropolice.org) and Michelle Thomas: [thomas@truropolice.org](mailto:thomas@truropolice.org)

## Truro Central School

The Truro School Committee permits use of the cafeteria and gymnasium by municipal boards and town departments as long as there are no scheduling conflicts. The cafeteria capacity is 108 and the gymnasium capacity is 301.

The school uses a Building Use Form, attachment #6 below, which should be filled out and returned to the school administration office or emailed to Kathy Rosenkampff --

[rosenkampffk@truromass.org](mailto:rosenkampffk@truromass.org) -- to seek permission to use Truro Central's gymnasium or cafeteria.

## **Truro Public Library**

To book a library meeting room, call 508-487-1125

The Elisha W. Cobb Room has a large table and seating for 10-12 people.

The Anne H. Brock Community Room has a 50-person maximum occupancy. Folding chairs and tables are available.

## **Change in Meeting Location**

When it is necessary to meet in a location other than that indicated on the meeting notice -- due to lack of space or inaccessibility of room -- a note must be placed on the front door of the building and on the door of the room identified in the meeting notice, informing the public of the new meeting location.

# **POLICIES ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Truro's elected and appointed board members are expected to act with integrity and maintain professional standards. Two Select Board policies define this behavior and how complaints should be handled:

### **Policy 54: Standards of Professional Conduct**

[https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy\\_54\\_standards\\_of\\_professional\\_conduct\\_signed\\_2.10.15.pdf](https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy_54_standards_of_professional_conduct_signed_2.10.15.pdf)

### **Policy 31: Written complaints and communications**

[https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy\\_31\\_written\\_complaints\\_and\\_communications\\_2017\\_signed.pdf](https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy_31_written_complaints_and_communications_2017_signed.pdf)

# **PAYMENT VOUCHERS**

Those boards and committees responsible for administering a budget are encouraged to make an appointment with the Town Accountant for instruction on the proper processing and submission of bills for payment. A Schedule of Departmental Bills Payable must be approved and signed by a majority of the board members. An updated list of authorized signatories must be provided to the Town Accountant each year.

# PURCHASING

Truro is required to follow state law for procuring supplies and services, the construction and repair of public works, and for public building construction and repair projects. The Town Manager is the designated Chief Procurement Officer responsible for assuring compliance. The Police Chief, Fire Chief and DPW Director have been delegated authority as Procurement Officers for their respective departments.

All boards, committees and departments not specifically delegated with procurement authority must contact the Town Manager’s office for obtaining supplies or services.

## TOWN HALL DIRECTORY

TOWN HALL OFFICES	PHONE NUMBERS
Assessor's Office	508-349-7004 Ext. 115, 116, 117
Board of Health	508-349-7004 Ext. 131
Select Board	508-349-7004 Ext. 111
Building Department	508-349-7004 Ext. 131
Conservation Commission	508-349-7004 Ext. 131
Executive Assistants	Nicole Tudor: 508-214-0925 Noelle Scoullar: 508-214-0936 Elizabeth Sturdy: 508-214-0935
Licensing Department	508-349-7004
Town Accountant	508-349-7004 Ext.120, Ext.125
Town Clerk	508-349-7004 Ext. 113, Ext. 114, Ext.126
Town Manager Assistant Town Manager	508-349-7004 Ext. 111 508-349-7004 Ext. 128
Town Planner	508-214-0928
Treasurer/Collector	508-349-7004 Ext. 113, 114,126

OTHER DEPARTMENTS	PHONE NUMBER
Emergency ONLY	911

Beach and Recreation	508-487-1632
Community Center	508-487-1632
Council on Aging	508-487-2462
Harbor	508-349-2555
Fire Department	508-487-7548
Truro Police Department	508-487-8730
Public Works	508-349-2140
Truro Central School	508-487-1558
Truro Public Library	508-487-1125

## SUMMARY OF LINKS/ATTACHMENTS

1. Open Meeting Law (includes copy of OML and Regulations, OML Guide, Complaint Process, and more):  
<http://www.mass.gov/ago/government-resources/open-meeting-law/>
2. Truro charter:  
[https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/zz\\_trurocharter\\_may\\_2018\\_2update.pdf](https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/zz_trurocharter_may_2018_2update.pdf)
3. Robert's Rules of Order: <https://robertsrules.com/>
4. Conflict of Interest Law: [www.state.ma.us/ethics](http://www.state.ma.us/ethics)
5. A Guide to the Massachusetts Public Records Law:  
<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/prepdf/guide.pdf>
6. Records Retention/Disposal Schedules:  
[http://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcpdf/MA\\_Municipal\\_Records\\_Retention\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcpdf/MA_Municipal_Records_Retention_Manual.pdf)
7. Guide to executive session:  
<https://www.masc.org/member-resources/resource-publications/executive-session/file>
8. A Guide to the Massachusetts Public Records Law:  
<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/prepdf/guide.pdf>
9. How long records must be preserved:  
<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcrmu/rmuidx.html>
10. Truro website: <https://www.truro-ma.gov>
11. Minutes and agendas for Truro boards:  
<https://www.truro-ma.gov/minutes-and-agendas>
12. Policy 10: Access to Town Counsel:  
[https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy\\_10\\_-\\_access\\_to\\_town\\_counsel\\_revised\\_dec\\_1\\_2015\\_signed.pdf](https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy_10_-_access_to_town_counsel_revised_dec_1_2015_signed.pdf)
13. Policy 54: Standards of Professional Conduct  
[https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy\\_54\\_standards\\_of\\_professional\\_conduct\\_signed\\_2.10.15.pdf](https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy_54_standards_of_professional_conduct_signed_2.10.15.pdf)
14. Policy 31: Written complaints and communications:  
[https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy\\_31\\_written\\_complaints\\_and\\_communications\\_2017\\_signed.pdf](https://www.truro-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3936/f/uploads/policy_31_written_complaints_and_communications_2017_signed.pdf)
15. Town Hall Directory (Attachment #1)
16. Requirements for posting meetings (Attachment #2)
17. Sample agenda format (Attachment 3)
18. List of elected and appointed boards (Attachment #4)
19. Authorized Signatory Form (Handbook Attachment #5)
20. Truro Central School Building Use Form (Attachment #6)

# REQUIREMENTS FOR POSTING MEETINGS

All notices and agendas for board meetings must be posted on the Town Hall bulletin board and on the Town's website (<https://www.truro-ma.gov>). The posting must be received by the Town Administrative Office at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays cannot be counted.

1. Posting shall contain the following:
  - Board Name
  - Meeting date, time and place
  - Agenda
2. Posting shall be on one side of 8 1/2 by 11 paper
3. Posting shall be received by 1:00 pm on the previous Thursday for meetings held on Monday evenings.
4. A hard copy of the meeting notice/agenda is preferred, however we understand that in order to comply with the 48-hour requirement, a meeting notice may need to be sent by email. If this is necessary, the notice must be sent to the all of the following:

Name	Title	Email	Phone
Nicole Tudor	Town Administration, Executive Assistant	ntudor@truro-ma.gov	508-214-0925
Noelle Scoullar	Town Administration, Executive Assistant	nscoullar@truro-ma.gov	508-214-0936
Elizabeth Sturdy	Office Assistant 3: Financial and Executive Staff Support	esturdy@truro-ma.gov	508-214-0935

A phone call to the office notifying us of the transmittal is encouraged. You will get a reply that the meeting has been posted. If that is not received, do not assume that the notice was posted by the Town Administrative staff. The Town Administrative Office is not responsible for notices which are left in the mailbox or sent by email if contact is not made with a staff person.

**SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA**



(NAME OF BOARD/COMMITTEE) MEETING (DATE) and (TIME)

TOWN HALL, ROOM XX

OR, if the meeting is remote, details on how the public may join

- CALL TO ORDER
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES
- PUBLIC COMMENT (Not applicable to all boards)
- NEW BUSINESS
- ONGOING BUSINESS
- ADJOURNMENT

## LIST OF TRURO BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

BOARD/COMMITTEE/ COMMISSION	ELECTED/ APPOINTED	TERM	MEMBERS/ ALTERNATE	MEETINGS
<a href="#"><u>Agricultural Commission</u></a>	A	3	3 + 1	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Beach Commission</u></a>	A	3	5	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Bike &amp; Walkways</u></a>	A	3	5 + 2	Monthly
<a href="#"><u>Board of Assessors</u></a>	A	3	3	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Board of Health</u></a>	A	3	5 + 1	Twice a month
<a href="#"><u>Cable &amp; Internet Advisory</u></a>	A	3	5	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Cemetery Commission</u></a>	E	3	3	Monthly
<a href="#"><u>Charter Review Committee</u></a>	A	3	7	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Climate Action Committee</u></a>	A	3	5 + 1	Twice a month
<a href="#"><u>Commission on Disabilities</u></a>	A	3	7	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Community Preservation Committee</u></a>	A	3	9	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Concert Committee</u></a>	A	3	9	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Conservation Commission</u></a>	A	3	7	Monthly
<a href="#"><u>Council on Aging</u></a>	A	3	8 + 1	Monthly
<a href="#"><u>Cultural Council</u></a>	A	3	6 + 2	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Energy Committee</u></a>	A	3	6 + 2	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Finance Committee</u></a>	A	3	5	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Historical Commission</u></a>	A	3	7	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Housing Authority</u></a>	E	5	5	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Human Services Committee</u></a>	A	3	5	As needed
<a href="#"><u>Library Trustees</u></a>	E	3	5	Monthly
<a href="#"><u>Local Comprehensive Plan Committee</u></a>	A	3	7	Monthly

<a href="#">Open Space Committee</a>	A	3	5 ?	As needed
<a href="#">Pamet Harbor Commission</a>	A	3	6 + 1	Monthly
<a href="#">Planning Board</a>	E	5	7	Twice a month
<a href="#">Recreation Commission</a>	A	3	5 + 1	As needed
<a href="#">Recycling Committee</a>	A	3	5 + 1	As needed
<a href="#">School Committee</a>	E	3	5	Twice a month
<a href="#">Select Board</a>	E	3	5	Twice a month
<a href="#">Shellfish Advisory Committee</a>	A	3	5 + 2	
<a href="#">Taxation Aid Committee</a>	A	3	5	As needed
Town Moderator	E	3	1	-
Truro Rep / County Human Rights Commission	A		1	
<a href="#">Water Resources Oversight Committee</a>	A	3	7	Monthly
<a href="#">Zoning Board of Appeals</a>	A	3	5 + 2	Monthly
<a href="#">Walsh Community Planning Committee</a>	A			As needed
* Alternates serve 1-year terms				

**SAMPLE AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY FORM**

OFFICE OF THE TOWN ACCOUNTANT  
TRURO, MASSACHUSETTS

Fiscal Year \_\_\_\_\_ Authorized Signatories

To: All Department Heads, Boards and Committees

Please complete the following form for the current fiscal year to advise this office of the names of employees and/or board members who are authorized to approve and sign payroll and/or vendor payment vouchers for your department:

Department, Board or Committee Name:

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- List all authorized signatories-- in most cases, this will be the department head (if no board involved) or all the current members of your board or committee
- Print name and provide signature

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PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE TOWN ACCOUNTANT

**TRURO CENTRAL SCHOOL BUILDING USE  
FORM**

# SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks for their work on this handbook to: Kristen Reed, Vice Chair, Truro Select Board; Susan Areson, Clerk, Truro Select Board; Ann Greenbaum, Chair, Truro Planning Board; Carol Harris, Chair, Truro Climate Action Committee; and Susan Howe, Chair, Truro Commission on Disabilities.